

Identifying Brand Influencer and FOMO Marketing: Strategies Through Smart Buying Decision to Counter Impulsive Buying of Skincare Products

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Brand influencer, fear of missing out (FoMo), impulsive buying, smart buying decision, skincare products.

The skincare industry has experienced rapid growth, with an increasing number of consumers becoming more concerned about their skin health and beauty. This study examines the impact of influenced brand marketing strategies and the fear of missing out (FoMo) on impulsive purchases of skincare products, considering the mediating role of smart purchasing decisions. The uniqueness of this study lies in testing the interaction between psychological factors, such as FoMo with the influence of influencers as well as the level of consumer rationality in the ever-evolving beauty market. Using an explanatory quantitative research design, data were collected through questionnaires from 216 millennial and Gen Z consumers in Medan. Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that brand influencers have a positive and significant effect on smart purchasing decisions, but do not have a direct effect on impulsive purchasing. Conversely, FoMo proved to be a very strong and significant driver of impulsive buying, while also negatively affecting consumers' ability to make smart purchasing decisions. It was found that smart purchasing decisions did not act as a mediator in the relationship between brand influence and impulsive buying.

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Introduction

The beauty and self-care industry in Indonesia is experiencing tremendous growth, with projected revenues reaching IDR 157 trillion in 2025 and a significant annual growth forecast of 4.51% per year (Statista, 2024). This expansion is driven by the dominant beauty standards in Indonesia, namely fair and bright skin, as well as the ease of access offered by the digital lifestyle. Digital transformation has given rise to various platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Shopee, and YouTube, which are now serve as media for promoting and transacting innovative and interactive skincare products (Arsel et al., 2025). People are worried about a big problem, the growing number of fake skincare products on the market and the overclaims made through aggressive marketing (Hajid, 2025). This is a very dangerous thing to do because these illegal products often contain harmful chemicals such as mercury and hydroquinone that can hurt your skin and cause long-term health problems (Gandhawangi, 2020). The presence of brand influencers on these platforms enables direct dialogue with consumers, making them representatives of products that can broaden the delivery of brand messages (Álvarez-Monzonillo, 2022). Its's kind of strange, but the problem actually gets worse because some celebrities and influencers push skincare products on social media that people suspect are fake this kind of thing just leads to irresponsible marketing and really confuses buyers (Mushtaq et al., 2025; Tempo.co, 2024). Influencer hold a lot of power, especially in areas like skincare. People trust them, so their recommendations feel real and personal (Shao et al., 2024). In recent years, the skincare industry has experienced rapid growth, with an increasing number of consumers becoming more concerned about their skin health and beauty. One of the factors driving this growth is the

role of social media and influencer marketing, which has changed the way people shop. Influencers, who have a huge following on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, have become a bridge between brands and consumers. They are able to influence consumer behavior in a very effective way, especially in creating a sense of urgency and desire to buy certain products. The Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon is also an important factor influencing purchasing decisions, especially among the younger generation. FoMO describes feelings of anxiety or fear of missing out on the opportunity to obtain something that is currently trending or popular. In the context of skincare products, FoMO is often triggered by influencers who promote products in a very appealing way, ultimately making consumers feel pressured to immediately purchase the product so they don't miss out on the trend. However, behind these marketing strategies that pique interest, there is the issue of impulsive buying. Consumers often make hasty decisions to purchase skincare products without considering their needs or the long-term impact on their skin. Impulsive buying can lead to wasted money and dissatisfaction with products that do not suit their individual skin needs.

The urgency of the research will focus on brand influencers and FoMO that influence impulsive buying of skincare products. Given the high public interest in skincare products, which is strongly driven by brand influencers and the FoMO phenomenon that triggers impulsive purchases. This phenomenon is beneficial for industry, but it opens the door for manufacturers of dangerous 'fake' products that have a negative impact on consumers' finances and health. Its significance lies in the urgency of encouraging smart buying decision amid the temptation of instant promises. The primary contribution of this research is a comprehensive analysis of the interaction between influencer marketing, the FoMO phenomenon, and impulsive buying behavior. Furthermore, this study proposes strengthening human resource capacity, specifically smart buying decisions, as a potential solution framework to the identified problem. This provides consumers with the information they need to make informed decisions based on price, quality, and risk considerations. Synergy with the Indonesian Food and Drug Administration (BPOM) will support the implementation of policies and sustainable education programs.

A smart buying decision refers to a wise and intelligent purchase choice made after careful considerations, including price comparison, quality assessment, and risk understanding (Perpres RI Nomor 49 Tahun 2024, 2024). It is explained that modern marketing is a marketing approach that utilizes technology and data to better understand consumers and create a more personalized and relevant experience (Prabowo et al., 2025). This study examines its implications for influencer marketing strategies and FoMO, as well as human resource development strategies grounded in smart buying decisions to address impulsive purchasing behavior for skincare products (Nurmalasari et al., 2024; Wamafma et al., 2023). Impulsive buying refers to unplanned purchases that occur suddenly and are driven by strong emotions (Liu et al., 2025). It constitutes a consumer's tendency to buy products spontaneously without prior planning, triggered by emotions, momentary desires, or external stimuli (Shamim & Azam, 2024). In the context of skincare products, consumers are often enticed by visual appeal, social pressure, or promises of instant results (Nurmalasari et al., 2024).

Marketing strategy is key to a business's success in achieving its goals in the market. The beauty and personal care industry in Indonesia is growing rapidly, so marketing strategies are very important to attract and retain customers (Malakiano & Susila, 2025). Marketing involves not only products sales, but also various planned activities to identify, predict, and meet customer needs and desires comprehensively (Simanihuruk et al., 2023). The digital era has changed the way marketing works, with digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Shopee, YouTube, etc. becoming innovative and interactive media for promotion and transactions (Bilyk et al., 2020). The brand influencers are individuals who has the trust, reach, and ability to influence the purchasing decisions of their followers through authority, knowledge, or position in a particular field (Malakiano & Susila, 2025). Brand influencers are public figures who significantly influence the purchasing decisions of their followers through content on various digital platforms (Arsel et al., 2025; Attri & Bhagwat, 2023). They build trust and credibility, especially in specific markets such as skincare products, so that the recommendations or promotions they provide feel honest and relevant (Che et al., 2025; Long et al., 2024).

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a feeling of anxiety that arises when someone feels afraid of missing out on experiences enjoyed by others, often triggered by social media use (Singh et al., 2023). This phenomenon occurs when social needs are not met, prompting someone to constantly monitor the latest information in order to feel connected (Nurmalasari et al., 2024). FoMO can also take the form of fear of

missing out on products that are viral or recommended by influencers, which is a psychological phenomenon triggered by digital lifestyles and social pressure (Lu & Sinha, 2024). It is driven by digital lifestyle and social pressure (Lu & Sinha, 2024; Nurmalasari et al., 2024). Through improving the quality of human resources, FoMO can be managed by maintaining a balance between digital activities and overall quality of life. Consumer choices today don't just come from rational thinking. Psychological and social pressures shape decisions in big ways (Simanihuruk et al., 2023). One of the factors is Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which refers to the worry of missing out on products that are currently trending or suggested by influencers (Lu & Sinha, 2024). This FoMO phenomenon is closely related to purchasing behavior. FoMO is triggered by social influence and product knowledge, while FoMO itself indirectly and significantly drives purchase intent (Dwisuardinata & Darma, 2022). FoMO itself does not directly and significantly drive purchase intent. This differs from the findings of (Nurmalasari et al., 2024), which state that FoMO and hedonistic values are the two main factors that drive impulsive purchases of skincare products.

Consumers are often tempted by visual appeal, social pressure, and promises of instant results, without carefully considering safety or actual needs. Impulsive purchasing behavior is usually unplanned, sudden and triggered by strong emotions (Shamim & Azam, 2024). This is a habit of buying products spontaneously without planning, triggered by emotions, momentary desires, or external stimuli, which in this context is the behavior of buying skincare products spontaneously without careful planning. This impulsive purchasing behavior of buying skincare products spontaneously without careful planning. This impulsive purchasing behavior, coupled with a lack of understanding about safe and quality products, contributes significantly to financial losses and health risks for consumers. The context of this study is supported by Presidential Regulation of (Perpres RI Nomor 49 Tahun 2024, 2024) upon which this study is based. This study was designed to analyze the causal relationship between marketing strategies involving brand influence and FoMO phenomenon on impulsive buying of skincare products. The main objective is to internalize the concept to rational and intelligent decision making among consumers.

Based on (Perpres RI Nomor 49 Tahun 2024, 2024) as the legal basis for strengthening the position of consumers in Indonesia, which has an impact on all parties, especially business actors and influencers, it is mandatory to implement clean and honest business practices. On the other hand, consumers are advised to always be active in understanding their rights and obligations (Wamafma et al., 2023). In industries such as skincare products, this regulation emphasizes the importance of mutual supervision and responsibility in protecting consumers from health and financial risks. Therefore, this research is urgently needed. On the one hand, marketing strategies through brand influencers and the use of FoMO do provide significant benefits for ethical and responsible skincare companies (Long et al., 2024). However, this practice also has a significant negative impact on consumers, leading to impulse buying, as well as providing opportunities for irresponsible manufacturers to market dangerous products. A thorough understanding of irresponsible manufacturers marketing dangerous products is needed. It also requires a thorough understanding of how these marketing strategies influence impulsive buying and how strengthening human resource capacity can encourage people to make smart buying decisions, including wise and intelligent decisions based on careful consideration of factors such as price, quality, and risk (BPOM, 2025). The results of this study are expected to provide effective solutions to the problem of impulsive buying and support the formation of smart buying decisions among the public.

Method

This study employs an explanatory quantitative research design to investigate the causal relationships between independent variables (brand influencer marketing strategies and FoMO) and dependent variables (impulsive buying) of skincare products. This study will identify the role of smart buying decisions as a mediating variable. The study used a survey method to collect data through questionnaires given to respondents. The results of the analysis are clearly explained for easier understanding in the conclusions section. The study was conducted in Medan, a city with a large millennial and Generation Z population and a diverse community. The population in this study consists of millennials and Generation Z who are accustomed to using technology and influenced by a digital lifestyle (aged between 18 and 44 years old) who tend to need skincare products, and live in the city of Medan, with an unknown number in 2025.

Sample determination in this study follows the provision that when the size of the research population is not known with certainty, the minimum sample size is 5 to 10 times the number of variable indicators. So, if there are 20 indicators, the minimum recommended sample size is 100 to 200 respondents (Hair et al., 2021). In accordance

with this recommendation, the total sample size for this research was established as 216 respondents. Measurement of variables can be seen at table 1 as follow:

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Variables	Indicator	Measurement Scale
Brand Influencer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Influencer credibility 2. Frequency of exposure to influencer content 3. Perception of product suitability with influencer 4. Level of trust in influencer recommendations 5. Influencer appeal 6. Influencer interaction 	Likert Scale 1-5
Fear Of Missing Out	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anxiety about current trends 2. The urge to follow others' purchases 3. The influence of social pressure 4. Lack of information 5. Quick decisions 	Likert Scale 1-5
Impulsive Buying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frequency of impulse purchases 2. Trigger factors (emotions, discounts, etc.) 3. Spontaneity habits 4. External influences 5. Post-purchase regret 	Likert Scale 1-5
Smart Buying Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product knowledge 2. Needs analysis 3. Risk assessment 4. Price comparison 5. Self-control 	Likert Scale 1-5

Sources: Researcher (2025)

The interpretation of the research data is presented in the form of images and table using Smart-PLS. The analysis adhered to a rigorous two-stage approach and validity through indicator loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity tests (the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio). This was followed by an evaluation of the structural model, where a bootstrapping procedure was employed to test the significance of the hypothesized paths and the mediating effects, while the coefficient of determination (R²) was examined to assess the model's overall explanatory power.

Results and Discussion

This study involved 216 respondents who were randomly selected to ensure representativeness, consisting of various backgrounds in term of age, gender, education, occupation, and domicile in the city of Medan. This study used hypothesis testing with the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. PLS is a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis method based on latent variable factors. This structural model is in line with the opinion (Hair et al., 2021) which states that the structural model explains causality between factors. The PLS test in this research used outer model evaluation and inner model with a significance level of 5% using the SmartPLS V.4.1.1.4 application program, as described in Figure 1 below:

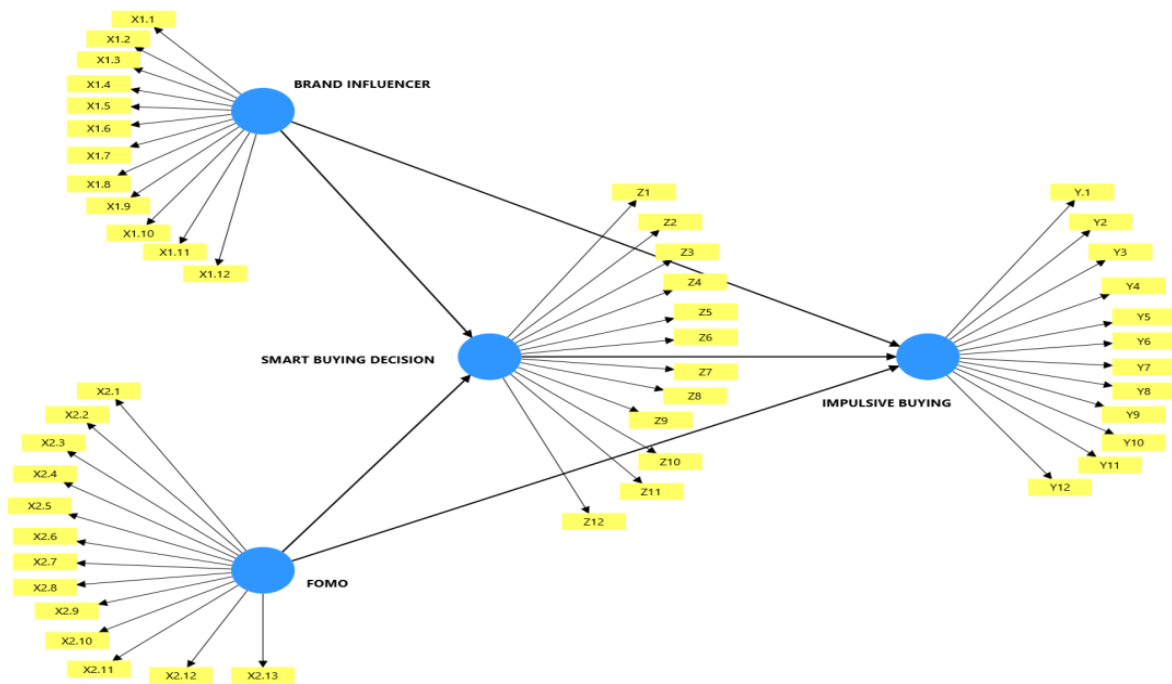


Figure 1. Path Analysis

Figure 1. shows direct and indirect effects, where direct effects are brand influence on impulsive buying, FoMO on impulsive buying, and smart buying decision on impulsive buying. Meanwhile, indirect effects are brand influence on impulsive buying through smart buying decision, and FoMo on impulsive buying through smart buying decision.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the research instruments were validated as follows:

Validity Test using Outer Loadings. The data analysis techniques were used to calculate validity and reliability, which were tested using outer loading value > 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021), as explained in the following chart:

Table 2. Outer Loading Results from PLS Algorithm

Brand Influencer		Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)		Impulsive Buying		Smart Buying Decision	
X1.1	0.706	X2.1	0.717	Y.1	0.772	Z1	0.763
X1.2	0.793	X2.2	0.813	Y2	0.856	Z2	0.837
X1.3	0.803	X2.3	0.794	Y3	0.850	Z3	0.855
X1.4	0.746	X2.4	0.779	Y4	0.877	Z4	0.812
X1.5	0.814	X2.5	0.751	Y5	0.723	Z5	0.851
X1.6	0.789	X2.6	0.854	Y6	0.867	Z6	0.795
X1.7	0.786	X2.7	0.886	Y7	0.902	Z7	0.852
X1.8	0.867	X2.8	0.879	Y8	0.844	Z8	0.770
X1.9	0.779	X2.9	0.753	Y9	0.843	Z9	0.860
X1.10	0.756	X2.10	0.717	Y10	0.880	Z10	0.822
X1.11	0.739	X2.11	0.784	Y11	0.729	Z11	0.757
X1.12	0.816	X2.12	0.853	Y12	0.707	Z12	0.782
		X2.13	0.868				

Sources: Data Processed by Author, 2025

Table 2. shows that the values of the variables brand influencer, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), impulsive buying, and smart buying decisions are greater than 0.70, so they can be declared valid.

Reliability Testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha outer loading. The reliability test determined that the outer loading value was > 0.7 using Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.7) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is > 0.50 (Hair et al., 2021), as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 3. Composite Reliability Values

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Influencer	0.943	0.943	0.950	0.614
Fear of Missing Out	0.954	0.958	0.960	0.649
Impulsive Buying	0.956	0.958	0.962	0.678
Smart Buying Decision	0.954	0.960	0.959	0.662

Sources: Data Processed by Author, 2025

Table 3. shows that the reliability value using Cronbach's Alpha analysis shows a result above 0.70, meaning that the decision making reflects the measurement of brand influencer, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), impulsive buying, and smart buying decision > 0.70, which can be stated to have met the reliability requirements. Furthermore, to determine the reliability value using AVE analysis, a value of > 0.50 has met the requirements for good convergent validity. From the outer loading measurement for impulsive buying, it needs to be maintained, but the measurement of brand influencer, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and smart buying decision needs to be accelerated for improvement.

Structural Model Test (Inner Model). Structural model testing using multicollinearity test with the condition that inner VIP < 5.

Table 4. Structural Model (Inner Model) Test Results

	Brand Influencer	Fear of Missing Out	Impulsive Buying	Smart Buying Decision
Brand Influencer			1.791	1.610
Fear of Missing Out			1.673	1.610
Impulsive Buying				
Smart Buying Decision			1.112	

Sources: Data Processed by Author, 2025

Using the inner model that VIP value is < 5, where brand influencer and FoMO do not contain multicollinearity, it can be stated that there is no bias. For impulsive buying and smart buying decision, it can be stated that they contain elements of multicollinearity because the VIP value is greater than 0.50.

Indirect Effect Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis Testing with Direct Effect. Hypothesis testing with a p-value < 0.05 is significant as shown in the following table.

Table 5. Direct Effect Test Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	P-Values	Confidence Interval			
			Lower (2.5%)	Bound	Upper (97.5%)	Bound
H1: Brand Influencer -> Impulsive Buying	0.028	0.508	-0.054		0.118	
H2: Brand influencer -> Smart Buying Decision	0.403	0.003	0.150		0.661	
H3: Fear of Missing Out -> Impulsive Buying	0.831	0.000	0.746		0.902	
H4: Fear of missing Out -> Smart Buying Decision	-0.238	0.038	-0.438		-0.001	
H5: Smart Buying Decision -> Impulsive buying	-0.003	0.938	-0.073		0.060	

Sources: Data Processed by Author, 2025

The analysis of the direct effects reveals distinct pattern among the variables. H1, which proposed a positive direct influence of brand influencer on impulsive buying is not supported (Original Sample = 0.028, p-value = 0.508). The negligible Original Sample and 95% bootstrap confidence interval [-0.054, 0.118] which includes zero, confirm the absence of a significant direct relationship.

Conversely H2 is supported, indicating that brand influencer has a significant positive direct effect on smart buying decision (Original Sample = 0.403, p-value = 0.003). This suggests that greater exposure to brand influencers increases the likelihood of consumers making smart buying decisions. The confidence interval for this path [0.150, 0.661] does not include zero, reinforcing this finding.

H3 strongly supported, demonstrating the fear of missing out (FoMO) has a powerful positive direct effect on impulsive buying (Original Sample = 0.831, p-value = 0.000). This indicates that higher levels of FoMO are a major driver of impulsive purchasing behavior. The confidence interval [0.746, 0.902] excluding zero affirms this robust relationship.

H4 is also supported, revealing a significant negative direct effect of FoMO on smart buying decision (Original Sample = -0.238, p-value = 0.038). This signifies that higher levels of FoMO inhibit consumers' ability to make smart, deliberate purchasing decisions. The confidence interval [-0.438, -0.00] confirm this negative relationship.

Finally, H5 which posited a negative direct effect of smart buying decision on impulsive buying, is not supported (Original Sample = -0.003, p-value = 0.938). The near-zero original sample and the confidence interval [-0.073, 0.060], which includes zero provide clear evidence that no significant direct effect exists between these two variables in this model.

Indirect Effect Hypothesis Test (Mediation Test)

The mediation analysis (indirect effect test) was conducted using significance < 0.05. Using specific indirect effects in assessing indirect effect with the condition that the p-value > 0.50 is as follows.

Table 6. Indirect Effect Test Result

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	P-values
Brand influencer -> smart buying decision -> impulsive buying	-0.001	0.945
Fear of missing -> smart buying decision -> impulsive buying	0.001	0.948

Sources: Data Processed by Author, 2025

H6 proposes that smart buying decision mediates the relationship between brand influencer and impulsive buying. This hypothesis is not supported as the analysis reveals a non-significant indirect effect (Original Sample = -0.001, p-value = 0.945). this finding indicates that smart buying decision does not function as a mediating variable in the relationship between brand influencer and impulsive buying.

H7 proposed that smart buying decision mediates the relationship between fear of missing out (FoMO) and impulsive buying. This hypothesis is also not supported, with a non-significant indirect effect (Original Sample = 0.001, p-value = 0.948). this result confirms that the effect of FoMO on impulsive buying is not transmitted through the smart buying decision pathway.

The results of this study's statistical test reveal the complex dynamics between brand influencers, FoMO and consumers' impulsive buying behavior in the skincare industry, with smart buying decision as a mediating variable. The following is an analysis and discussion to provide a deeper understanding.

H1 is rejected, this indicated that brand influencer marketing strategies do not directly encourage impulsive buying. This finding differs from previous research stating that influencer communication factors can increase the urge to buy impulsively (Shamim & Azam, 2024). This disparity may occur because consumers are not only influenced by influencer recommendations but also process this information more rationally.

H2 is accepted, this means that the more consumers are exposed to content from brand influencers, the more likely they are to make smart and wise purchasing decisions. This is in line with source credibility theory, where the expertise and knowledge of influencers can increase consumers' understanding of products, helping them analyze their needs and evaluate risks (Kusbianto et al., 2025).

H3 is strongly accepted, this finding confirms that FoMO is the main driver of impulsive buying behavior. The fear of missing out triggered by social media causes consumers to act based on emotional

impulses. These results are in line with previous studies that state that FoMO is one of the variables that directly drives impulsive buying (Nurmalasari et al., 2024).

H4 is accepted, this means that the higher the fear of missing out felt by consumers, the less likely they are to make smart purchasing decisions. FoMO encourages consumers to act quickly without considering rational factors such as needs analysis and risk evaluation, which are part of smart buying decisions. This is in line with previous research which states that FoMO is only based on the fear of missing out and without careful consideration beforehand (Bright & Logan, 2018).

H5 was rejected, although logically smart buying decisions should reduce impulsive buying, the results of this study show that skincare products that are driven by emotions and trends. The ability to make wise purchasing decisions does not significantly reduce impulsive buying behavior. This could be because impulsive buying (emotional impulses) is much stronger than rational considerations, so even though consumers know how to buy wisely, they remain vulnerable to impulsive buying. The results of this study are supported by findings from previous studies which concluded that internal factors such as emotional impulses and internal factors such as promotions have a significant effect on impulsive buying (Hardyansah et al., 2024). This means that emotional stimuli can lead to strong impulsive buying, even overriding wise purchasing decisions.

H6 is rejected, although brand influencers have a positive influence on smart buying decisions, this ability is not sufficient to mediate the reduction of impulsive buying. This indicates that smart buying decisions do not act as a mediating variable in the relationship between brand influencers and impulsive buying. In other word, the influence of brand influencers on impulsive buying does not go through a smart decision-making process.

H7 was rejected, these results indicate that smart buying decisions cannot mediate the relationship between FoMO and impulsive buying. Although FoMO inhibits smart decision-making, the ability to buy wisely is not strong enough to resist the impulse to buy triggered by the fear of missing out.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted, this study concludes that FoMO is a very strong and significant direct driver of impulsive buying of skincare products among millennial and gen Z consumers in Medan. Meanwhile, brand influencers do not directly trigger impulsive buying but rather contribute positively to the formation of smart buying decisions. Another key finding is that smart buying decision are not proven to be a mediating variable in the relationship between brand influencers and impulsive buying or between FoMO and impulsive buying. This indicates that the emotional drive of FoMO tends to override rational considerations when consumers make purchasing decisions. However, these finding need to be considered in light of several limitations of the study. The limited geographical and demographic coverage of the sample may affect the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the indication of multicollinearity between the constructs of impulsive buying and smart buying decision has the potential to affect the stability of parameter estimates which is a methodological challenge in this study. To encourage more rational shopping behavior, consumer education efforts are needed to raise awareness of the psychological influence of FoMO and digital literacy in assessing promotional content. Consumers should also be more discerning by not easily trusting information, verifying every piece of information from credible sources (regulatory authorities) such as the Indonesia Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM) through the website <http://cekbpom.pom.go.id> or by installing the CEK BPOM app from the Google Play Store in our smartphones. When selecting skincare products, follow the KLIK steps (in Indonesian terms) which stands for packaging, label, distribution permit, expiration date. For industry players and influencers, these findings emphasize the importance of ethical marketing practices that do not exploit consumers fears. Further research is recommended to expand the sample size, explore other mediators such as emotional regulation and use a longitudinal approach to understand the dynamics of variable relationships more comprehensively.

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